

failed. Finally both projecting ends were treated as head ends, being whacked twice each, and then swallowed in the usual manner.

In another feeding experiment a bee-sized blowfly was slipped into line in place of a bee in a succession of bees. The result was startling. The fly was snapped up, lightly rapped once, and swallowed with no further preparation whatsoever. The preceding and following bees were prepared as described, as indeed were all bees.

The bee-eater regurgitated large pellets, consisting of insect hard parts, to the number of two or three per day. One pellet measured 20 x 11 mm., this one approximating the average size.

#### SUMMARY

A captive adult Australian Bee-eater when fed with honey bees, blowflies, cicadas and slaters adopted an individual and stereotyped feeding technique with each type of animal. It instantly changed to the appropriate method when, for example, a harmless bee-sized blowfly was slipped into a feeding line of honey bees. The bees, but not the other insects, were invariably dealt with by a complicated series of movements which resulted in the stinging apparatus being rendered inoperative before the bee was killed and swallowed. The bird ascertained the position of the stinging end of the bee by one, sometimes two, initial blows of the insect against the perch.

## HERPETOLOGICAL MISCELLANEA

By L. GLAUERT, M.B.E., Western Australian Museum, Perth.

### XIII. A NEW SKINK FROM THE NORTH-WEST CAPE, WESTERN AUSTRALIA

#### *Lygosoma (Rhodona) nigriceps* sp. nov.

This species is closely related to *Lygosoma (Rhodona) miopus* (Gnth.) from which it differs in the shape and size of the head shields, its coloration and longer limbs.

Body elongate, the distance from the tip of the snout to the fore limb  $3\frac{1}{2}$  times in that from the fore limb to the hind limb. Fore limb represented by a bud in a depression or entirely absent, hind limb monodactyle. Head cuneiform, snout rounded with a projecting labial edge; rostral about twice as wide as high with a slightly concave suture to the nasals; nostril in a somewhat swollen nasal forming a short suture with its fellow and separating the rostral from the frontonasal; frontonasal about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  as wide as long; wider than the frontal with which it forms a wide suture; prefrontals very small, widely separated, just visible from above, separated from the labials by the posterior loreal.

Frontal large, much wider than the supraocular region, as wide as long, about as long as its distance from the tip of the snout, fitting into the concave anterior margin of the fused frontoparietals, in contact with 2 of the 3 supraoculars; supraoculars 3, second largest, 6 or 7 supraciliaries; several small pre- and postoculars; frontoparietals and interparietals fused, wider and larger than the frontal; parietals long, forming a suture behind the frontoparietals; 5 upper

labials, the 4th entering the eye, 6 lower labials; 2 narrow loreals. Eye small the lower lid with a transparent disk. Ear opening very small. Two or 3 enlarged nuchals. Two enlarged preanals. Twenty smooth scales round the body. Tail long and tapering, as wide as the body. Fore limb reduced to a bud in a depression or absent; hind limb monodactyle, shorter than the distance from the tip of the snout to the ear, longer than that from the ear to the fore limb, 4 lamellae under the toe.

Colour above uniform pale brown, each scale light-edged, the colour darkening towards and on the tail; head blackish, labials white with dark markings, 8 more or less complete dark brown lines from the occiput to the level of the ear; limbs dark-spotted; under surface uniform whitish.

Head, 9.2 mm. Head and body, 93 mm. Tail, 73 mm. Hind limb, 7.5 mm.

The type R 14039, now in the Western Australian Museum, collected at Vlaming Lighthouse, North West Cape by Mrs. Thomas.

The relevant portion of the key to the Western Australian species of *Rhodona* (on p. 79 of my *Handbook of the Lizards of Western Australia*, 1962) may be expanded as follows to include the new species:

Fingers a "bud," toes 2

Two bands ..... *pieturatum*

Fingers a "bud," toes 1

Four rows of dots ..... *miopus*

No bands, head black ..... *nigriiceps*

## A WILLIAMS BIRD LIST

By ERIC H. SEDGWICK, Collie.

### PERIOD OF OBSERVATION

The writer spent a nominal two years at Williams, but, owing to a lengthy absence, observations were practically confined to the period between May 1954 and December 1955.

### THE DISTRICT

Williams, 100 miles S.E. of Perth, is situated in a transition area between the jarrah forest block and the open forest of the wheat-belt.

Dominant local timbers are jam (*Acacia acuminata*), wandoo (*Eucalyptus redunea*), marri (*Euc. calophylla*), jarrah (*Euc. marginata*), she-oak (*Casuarina huegeliana*) and, along water courses, flooded gum (*Euc. rudis*).

Considerable areas have long been cleared and developed as pasture land or cropped, but much natural vegetation remains. Although alienated, the banks of the Williams River, a near-permanent stream, still carry flooded gums and associated vegetation. On the other hand the local bush fire prevention organisation is denuding the townsite and road reserves by its remarkable policy